

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2817

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: RF, PINS, PINT

SUBJECT: ANC AND RF CONGRESSES

1. TWO WEEKEND RHODESIAN POLITICAL CONGRESSES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PERSONAL TRIUMPHS FOR RESPECTIVE MAJOR PROTAGONISTS; IAN SMITH AND JOSHUA NKOMO. ESTIMATED 5,000 AFRICANS MET IN SALISBURY'S HIGHFIELD BLACK TOWNSHIP TO ELECT SUPU'S JOSHUA NKOMO NEW ANC PRESIDENT. CONGRESS WAS PREDICTABLY ATTACKED AS ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL BY ANTI-NKOMO FORCES. DR. ELLIOT GABELLAH ANNOUNCED IN BULAWAYO THAT "LEGITIMATE" ANC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD BE HELD OCT 5 (PRESUMABLY WITHIN RHODESIA) TO PREPARE FOR "LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONGRESS TO BE HELD OCTOBER 19".

2. ACCEPTING NOMINATION BY ACCLAMATION AS PRESIDENT OF ANC NKOMO REAFFIRMED WILLINGNESS TO TALK WITH SMITH REGIME
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BUT INSISTED THAT ANY NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE ON BASIS OF

OBTAINING "MAJORITY RULE NOW". NKOMO VOWED WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN "INTENSIFIED ARMED STRUGGLE" SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS FAIL. SEPT 29 PRESS CARRIES ARTICLE STATING THAT NKOMO'S ANC WILL NOT BE ORGANIZATIONALLY PREPARED TO APPROACH SMITH FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH.

3. RHODESIAN FRONT CONGRESS AT UMTALI PROVED TO BE PERSONAL SUCCESS FOR IAN SMITH. AFTER 50-MINUTE SMITH SPEECH IN CLOSED SESSION EVENING SEPT 25, MOTION CALLING FOR URGENT CONSIDERATION OF CREATION OF FEDERATION OF RHODESIAN STATES, IN EFFECT, DIVISION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA INTO ONE WHITE STATE AND TWO BLACK HOMELANDS, WAS WITHDRAWN FROM GENERAL DEBATE AND SENT TO COMMITTEE. MOTION HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN INTRODUCED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SUTTON-PRYCE AND HAD REPORTEDLY RECEIVED ENTHUSIASTIC BACKING OF MAJORITY OF DELEGATES. SMITH APPARENTLY ABLE TO CONVINCE CONGRESS THAT OPEN DISCUSSION OF CONFEDERATION PLAN AT THIS TIME WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE.

4. SMITH ALSO APPARENTLY SCORED SOME SORT OF TRIUMPH BY REFUSING TO CLEAR UP CONFUSION SURROUNDING HIS STATEMENT ADMITTING POSSIBILITY OF BLACK PRIME MINISTER FOR RHODESIA. PRIOR TO CONGRESS, RHODESIAN FRONT CHAIRMAN DES FROST HAD PUBLICLY CALLED ON SMITH TO CLARIFY STATEMENT "AS GREAT DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE TO RHODESIA'S IMAGE INTERNALLY AND IN SOUTH AFRICA". SMITH FURTHER OBFUSCATED BY SIMPLY LECTURING DELEGATES NOT TO BELIEVE EVERYTHING THEY READ IN PRESS WHICH OFTEN DISTORTS FACTS. AT PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER CLOSE OF CONGRESS ON SEPT 27, SMITH REPORTEDLY SAID "THERE WAS NO RULE TO SAY THERE COULD NOT BE A BLACK PRIME MINISTER." HE ALSO NEITHER CONFIRMED NOR DENIED RAMPANT PRESS SPECULATION THAT HE MIGHT INVITE BLACKS TO SIT IN CABINET. SMITH TOLD REPORTERS "THERE IS PLACE FOR AFRICANS IN RHODESIA AND IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY, PROVIDED THEY ARE THE CORRECT PEOPLE. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS HERE THAT AFFECT AFRICANS, SO WHY SHOULD I SAY THAT ONLY WHITE PEOPLE SHOULD DEAL WITH THESE THINGS."

5. COMMENT: BY FOSTERING PRESS SPECULATION OF POSSIBILITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF BLACKS IN CABINET SMITH MAY SERIOUSLY BE FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THREAT TO DEAL WITH "MORE REPRESENTATIVE AFRICANS" RATHER THAN ANC, OR SIMPLY ENGAGING IN PLOY TO HURRY NKOMO TO NEGOTIATION TABLE WHILE NEW ANC STILL UNORGANIZED AND, THUS, IN SUPPOSEDLY WEAKER BARGAINING POSITION.
BOWDLER

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